NEWS FROM NARFE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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February 26, 1985

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IF IT'S WRONG FOR A DIME IT'S WRONG FOR A DOLLAR

Washington, D. C. -- With these words, "Lud" Andolsek, President of the half-million member National Association of Retired Federal Employees, called on Congress to again reject the Reagan Administration's budget proposals on Civil Service retirement and health benefits. Most of the Administration's proposals have been considered and repudiated in the past by Congress. While recognizing that the stakes are higher this year because of irresponsible fiscal policies and their resultant deficits, Andolsek stood firm stating "If it's wrong for a dime, it's wrong for a dollar".

He likened the proposed structural changes to the retirement system to "pulling up stakes on the near end of a transitional bridge before the far side is secured," referring to Congress' yet to be finished work on fashioning a supplemental retirement program for employees hired after 1983. "Let's not break with the past until we have a foot firmly planted in the future."

Attacking the plan to freeze, then cut only Civil Service Retirement COLAS as "duplicitous", Andolsek noted that retiree's deserve inflation protection no matter for whom they worked. On the proposal to manipulate the size of future COLAS, he recalled his days as Commissioner of Civil Service when adjustments were viewed as "election protection for politicians rather than inflation protection for the elderly." He also observed that means-tests might be appropriate for welfare, but they have no place in a staff retirement program.

Concerning the proposed voucher system of health insurance, the Association President stated, "Rebates may be appropriate gimmicks on the car lots of America, but they do not belong on the minds of American citizens making crucial health care decisions."

Expressing the retiree association's concern over the deficit problem, Andolsek expressed a willingness to discuss reasonable approaches to restricting the costs of COLAS. But the requirements for such approaches were made clear -- "They must be consistent across the board, and they must not run contrary to the goals of the retirement programs they affect."

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